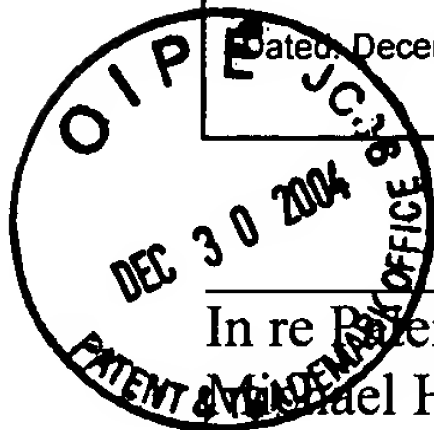


I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as Express Mail, Airbill No. EV335376501US, in an envelope addressed to: MS Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date shown below.

Dated: December 30, 2004 Signature:

*Georgina Matos*  
(Georgina Matos)

Docket No.: 223002010004  
(PATENT)



**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re Patent Application of:  
Michael HOUGHTON et al.

Application No.: 09/884,455

Art Unit: 1652

Filed: June 18, 2001

Examiner: W. Moore

For: HEPATITIS C VIRUS PROTEASE

**AMENDMENT IN RESPONSE TO NON-FINAL OFFICE ACTION**

MS Amendment  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This is in response to the non-final Office Action dated July 1, 2004, for which a response was due on October 1, 2004. Filed herewith is a Petition and fee for a three-month extension of time, thereby extending the deadline for response to January 1, 2005. Accordingly, this response is timely filed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in light of the remarks presented herein is respectfully requested.